

Local affiliates gleefully ride ABC's coattails during its two-year rise to prime-time supremacy

Market-by-market comparison of Arbitron sweeps reflects additional gains made in weekday daytime and network evening news; dramatic advances also made in competition for early-morning and late-night audiences

No network has ever moved as far and as quickly as ABC-TV has in scaling the prime-time ratings. From unquestioned third place in 1975 it has risen to unchallenged first in 1977. Its success is reflected in its ratings, its image, its billings—and in many cases in the standings of its affiliates in their communities.

A measure of the changes that affiliates have felt is provided in the accompanying table. Market by market, it shows for primary affiliates of each network the number of households reached as shown by the Arbitron sweeps for February this year as compared with February a year ago—not only in prime time but also in Monday-Friday daytime and in network evening news.

The figures, compiled by ABC researchers, show ABC affiliates leading in total in prime time, of course, but in a close third-place position in daytime and a clear third in network news. Even where they are cumulatively in third place, however, the ABC affiliates have made substantially bigger gains in homes delivered than those of the other networks. In two day parts not shown in the table—early morning and late night—the ABC affiliates rank second in homes delivered and their gains over a year ago are even more spectacular.

In prime time, ABC affiliates delivered 8% more households than they did a year ago, reaching a total of 16,850,000, while CBS affiliates declined 9% to 13,519,000 and NBC affiliates dropped 6% to 12,181,000. In terms of three-network share, that

figures out to 40% for ABC, up from 36% a year ago; 32% for CBS, down from 34%, and 28% for ABC, down from 30%.

Among affiliates, February 1977 found gains for 116 ABC stations, 33 CBS stations and 36 NBC stations, all compared with February 1976. Losses were recorded for 36 ABC, 125 CBS and 120 NBC affiliates.

In Monday-Friday daytime, ABC affiliates increased by 20% in household delivery to reach a total of 5,182,000. CBS and NBC affiliates declined, the former by 3% to 6,365,000, the latter by 4% to 5,320,000. It works out to a 31 share for ABC, a 38 for CBS and a 31 for NBC. Gains in daytime were reported for 113 ABC affiliates, 65 CBS affiliates and 45 NBC affiliates, while losses were turned in by 25 ABC, 81 CBS and 103 NBC stations.

In network news, ABC affiliates added 17% to their households total, which reached 7,745,000. Affiliates of the other networks showed lesser gains but their totals were considerably higher than ABC's. CBS affiliates were up 3% to 12,023,000 households, NBC affiliates up 9% to 11,030,000. ABC's share rose two points to 25%, while CBS's dropped two to 39% and NBC's held even at 36%. Gains in network news were reported by 109 ABC, 99 CBS and 92 NBC affiliates; declines were noted for 30 ABC, 57 CBS and 61 NBC outlets.

In two dayparts not shown in the table—early-morning and late night—ABC affiliates' percentage gains were even more dramatic. They delivered 2,516,000 households for ABC's *Good Morning, America*, 73% more than in February 1976, while CBS *Morning News* was dropping 4% to 1,595,000 and first-place *Today* on NBC was adding 4% to reach 4,031,000. The early-morning shares were 50% for NBC, 31% for ABC, 20% for CBS. Gains in homes delivered were reported for 115 ABC, 63 CBS and 88 NBC

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